

Henry Marvin Yerington House
512 N. Division St.
Carson City
Nevada

HABS NO. NEV-13-18

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HENRY MARVIN YERINGTON HOUSE

Location: 512 North Division Street (SW corner Division and Robinson Streets), Carson City, Nevada

Present Owner: John R. and Bonnie J. Bullis

Present Occupant: Office of John R. Bullis, Certified Public Accountant

Present Use: The major portion of the house is used as Mr. Bullis' office. The northern wing, originally the service wing, is rented as an apartment.

Statement of Significance: The Yerington House is an attractive and extremely decorative late 19th century structure. The home of H.M. Yerington, an important figure in the early history of the State of Nevada, it is well maintained and largely in original condition.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physcial History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1870. The property was deeded to Mrs. Yerington in the fall of 1869. The 1871-72 Directory for Ormsby County is the earliest directory having Yerington living at this address. Further, there is a photograph of the house, dated c. 1870, from the Yerington family album.
2. Architect: none known.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

The Yerington House is built on the northern half of Block No. 59 of Proctor and Green's Division of Carson City. (Frank M. Proctor and B.F. Green were two of the four original purchasers in 1858 of the Eagle Ranch, upon which Carson City was platted). The following references tracing the title of the property are found in the Ormsby County, Nevada, Deed Books:

1866 Deed, September 8, 1866, recorded in Book 11, page 158. James Fraser received title to lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the north half of lots 5 and 6 in Block 59 in fee simple from the United States Government. (The lots are the northern half of Block 59).

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- 1868 Deed, February 14, 1868, recorded in Book 11, page 600. Peter Lightle bought lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the north half of lots 5 and 6 in Block 59 from James Fraser for \$800.00.
- 1868 Deed, November 14, 1868, recorded in Book 12, page 184. O.P. Willis bought lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the north half of lots 5 and 6 from Peter Lightle and Anna Lightle for \$900.00.
- 1869 Deed, October 4, 1869, recorded in Book 12, page 445. Susan Mary Yerington (wife of Henry M. Yerington) bought the north half of block 59 from Orlando P. Willis and Margaret R. Willis for \$1,200.00.
- 1920 Deed April 9, 1920, recorded in Book 37, page 325. Clara V. Yerington (second wife and widow of Henry M. Yerington) sold the north half of Block 59 to Peter Heitman for \$5,500.00.

Title to the property changed hands several times during the 1920's and the rear lot, on which a stable had been located, was sold during this decade. The house was eventually purchased by George B. Russell, who lived in it until his death in 1967.

- 1968 Deed June 6, 1968, recorded in Ormsby County Official Records, Book 76, page 616. Omer W. Wolf and Marie Rose Wolf bought the northern one-half of Block 59 (except for the west 60 feet) from the estate of George B. Russell, deceased.
- 1971 Deed, March 8, 1971, recorded in Ormsby County Official Records, Book 106, page 625. John R. Bullis and Bonnie J. Bullis purchased the northern one-half of Block 59, except for the west 60 feet from Omer W. and Marie Rose Wolf.

5. Alterations and additions: The major additions to the house seem to have been made early in the Yerington tenure. The north wing, now a separate apartment, was originally the wine cellar and service wing. It consists of several small rooms wrapped around a hollow core which is several feet below grade. This was the wine cellar, and may have served for cold storage as well. It is reached by a flight of several steps from the front (east) room of the north wing.

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The ceiling of the wine cellar is lower than the ceiling height of the rooms which surround it. Storage shelves, closets, etc., are installed above it. These open into the several surrounding rooms with doors near the ceiling level.

This wing is shown in a photograph which is dated circa 1870. In all probability, it is a very early addition, if not in fact contemporaneous with the main block of the house.

The rear portion (SW) of the southern wing is also an early addition, and is seen in an 1872 photograph. By 1872, there was a sun parlor on the southeast of the house, this wrapped around the east front of the wing and the southern side of the main block.

From the notes and bills in the Yerington papers at The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley, it would seem that there was much construction activity on the house during the years 1873-1876. The work must have been essentially complete by May 31, 1876, when an item occurs concerning the laying of carpets. It is more than probable that the present southeast room, which is not present in the 1872 photograph, was added at this time. The sun parlor, or porch, was removed from its original location and at least a portion of it placed to the east of the new room. It may well be that it was at this same time that the arch of Philippine mahogany was installed in the dining room. In the original scheme, the dining room would undoubtedly have been two rooms, perhaps connected by double doors. With the addition of the new formal parlor, (the SE room), the partition wall between the old parlor and the dining room could have been removed, and the arch installed as both support and decoration.

During their recent restoration the present owners found several initials and a date (RER, FTR, CMB, 1887) on the ceiling of the dining room under a plaster medallion.

During the mid 20th century, under the ownership of Mr. Russell, the house was divided into three apartments: one on the south, one in the middle (comprising the original portion of the house), and one in the north wing. The first two divisions have been eliminated, and the former southern and middle apartments are now reunited. The northern wing, formerly the servants quarters, still functions as a separate rental unit.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

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Henry Marvin Yerington was born in Colburne, Ontario, Canada on September 5, 1829. In 1858 he married Susan Mary Hume, and in 1863 with his wife and two sons came to Carson City. At this time Yerington was associated primarily with milling operations. He is listed in the 1868-69 Directory as "Yerington, H.M., millman". He constructed the first flume for sending timber down from Lake Tahoe to the Carson Valley. By 1868 he was associated with the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, which was organized in March of that year, and drove the first and the last spikes for the V. and T. tracks from Virginia City to Carson City. In 1872, he was appointed General Superintendent of the V. & T.

There were three sons and a daughter of this first marriage. The first Mrs. Yerington died in May 1874, and in 1887 Mr. Yerington married Clara Bender. There was one child, Henry Herbert, of this marriage. In 1876 Yerington became Vice-president, as well as continuing to be General Superintendent, of the railroad. He was also largely responsible for the Carson and Colorado Railroad, which was completed in 1882 and sold to The Southern Pacific Company in 1900.

During the course of his many faceted professional career, Yerington was involved in over forty companies, generally as an officer or member of a Board of Directors. In addition to the railroad, his major interests were in milling, mining, and timber operations. He was also at one time president of the Carson Water Works. The Yeringtons were very active in the Episcopal Church (see HABS No. NEV-13-11). Yerington himself held no political office but by virtue of his position with the railroad and consequently the mining and industrial interests, was able to influence many of the policies and decisions of Nevada politics of his time.

In his later years, Mr. Yerington became deaf, and according to the children in the neighborhood, quite irascible. Perhaps a truer measure of the man is the fact that the day before he died, he went to his office and burned all the notes due him from individuals to whom he had lent money over the years. The next day, November 25, 1910, he passed away. His funeral, held at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, was the largest which had then been held in Carson City. Special trains were run from Virginia City and Reno. Yerington is buried in Lone Mountain Cemetery in Carson City.

The Yerington family held the house until 1920. During the mid-twentieth century, Mr. George B. Russell was perhaps the most noted of its occupants. Russell was a native of Elko, served

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two terms in the Nevada State Assembly, and in 1910 became Supervisor of the U.S. Census for the State. In 1927 he was appointed State Treasurer, and moved permanently to Carson City. In 1928 he was elected to the post of treasurer and served for eight years. In 1954 Russell became bailiff of the U.S. District Court in Carson City and held this position until his retirement in 1960. Russell made the house into three apartments and occupied the central one.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: The Yerington family album contains many pictures relating to the house, both exterior and interior. The present owners of the house have an extensive collection of these photographs hung in the appropriate rooms of the house. These were furnished by Mr. Stephen Drew (see Bibliography), who also has a large group of early photographs of the house.

2. Bibliography:

Beebe, Lucius, and Clegg, Charles. Steamers to The Comstock
Berkeley: Howell-North, 1957.

Beebe, Lucius, and Clegg, Charles. Virginia and Truckee, A
Story of Virginia City and Comstock Times. Berkeley:

Brown, Bertha Bender. A Tale of Three Cities, Reno, Carson,
San Francisco, 1863-1930 Naturegraph Co., 1964. (The
author of this volume is the niece of the second Mrs.
Yerington. There is a chapter entitled "Stories of Uncle
Henry").

The Nevada Appeal Carson City, October 27, 1967 (obituary
notice of George B. Russell).

Davis, Sam. P., ed. The History of Nevada, Reno: The Elms
Publishing Co., 1913.

Myrick, David F. Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California
(Vol. 1, The Northern Roads) Berkeley: Howell-North 1962.

Thompson, Thomas H., and West, Albert A. History of Nevada
Berkeley: Howell-North, 1958 (facsimile reprint of this
volume which was originally published in 1881).

Wren, Thomas, ed.; A History of the State of Nevada, Its
Resources and People. New York: Lewis Publishing Co. 1904.

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Storey, Ormsby, Washoe and Lyon Counties Directory. Sacramento:
H.S. Crocker and Co., 1871

The most extensive collection of Yerington material is in the Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley. There are some 60,000 letters relating to H.M. Yerington, in addition to other papers. This material has been researched by Mr. Stephen E. Drew, 4180 Randolph Avenue, Oakland, California, 94602, who is one of the leading authorities on Yerington and the Virginia and Truckee Railroad (see HABS No. NEV-13-7). Mr. Drew generously gave of his time and material in the preparation of this study.

Prepared by: S. Allen Chambers, Jr.
Architectural Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey
December 1972

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Merit and Interest: A late nineteenth-century house of unusually decorative character with important historical associations.
2. Condition of fabric: Good; recently repaired and put in good condition. Now well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: about 23 ft. by 39 ft., one-and-a-half stories, rectangular. Overall dimensions including early additions, about 86 ft. by 69 ft.; roughly T-shaped.
2. Foundations: Low, largely covered with a wooden base member, wooden water table. Brick foundation under bay windows and porches.
3. Walls: The oldest part is covered with siding exposed four inches; other parts have novelty siding with seven-inch exposure. There are corner boards. The exterior is now painted a cool gray with white trim.
4. Structural system: Wood frame.

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5. Porches: East: on the main front there is a one-story porch, one by three bays. Columns are made of two 2" by 4" pieces with a space between; this is a type common in the locality. The columns have a moulded base, a "dado" band and a cap band. Above the caps there are foliated-scroll brackets. There is a narrow cornice. A shed roof of low pitch has the rafters exposed underneath, with the ceiling of matched and beaded boards. The floor is of narrow matched pine boards.

A porch on the east side of the northwest wing is similar in size and design. Its roof is covered with composition shingles.

At the west end of the building there is a rear porch.

6. Chimneys: There are modern brick chimneys in the east gable and near the center of the south side. Older chimneys are located on the south portion of the east front, at the west gable of the original portion, and on the south wall of the southwest wing.

7. Openings:

- a. Doors: The main entrance is near the center of the east front (SE corner of original portion). It is recessed, the jambs and soffit being paneled. There are narrow side-lights with colored glass etched with an ornamental vine motive. Amber and blue backgrounds alternate; the vine is clear glass. Above the door there is a transom with a figure composition, "Spring and Autumn"; the background is red, the figures clear glass. The door has two horizontal panels in the lower part, with raised fields ornamented with horizontal reeding. In the upper part of the door there is a large glazed panel; a geometrical pattern of beveled leaded plate glass. It does not appear to have its original hardware.

At the south end of the entrance porch a doorway enters an enclosed porch. The door has a semicircular head and is glazed. At either side there is a narrow semicircular-headed sidelight.

The entrance door to the northwest wing is modern.

- b. Windows: Windows in the oldest part have plain trim with a moulded cornice; sash are replacements, one light above one light, double hung. In other places some windows are rectangular, others segmental-arched. Sash are double hung, one light above one light. Most rectangular windows have cornices.

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Windows of the bays and enclosed porch are grouped; they have semicircular heads and trim with a roll moulding. Double-hung sash have one light above one light. There are panels below the sills.

8. Roof: There is a gable roof over the original part of the house, now covered with composition shingles. The other areas have either flat or shed roofs. There are no dormers.
9. Cornice: There are a plain frieze band, ornamental brackets in pairs, a course of large dentils, corona, cavetto and ovolo mouldings.

On the enclosed porch and bay windows, there are a narrow architrave band, plain frieze, a course of large dentils, (single) modillions with pendant acorn, corona and small cavetto.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Plan: The original (central) portion appears to have had a stair hall along the south side and two rooms along the north side (front and rear). There may have been a service wing at the west end.

At present the stair hall is central, with two large rooms on the south and a single long room on the north. Toward the west end there are smaller rooms, and wings at the north and south sides.

On the second story, which extends only above the original building, there are front and rear rooms separated by a small hall. These appear to be original.

2. Stairway: There is an open-well stair with winders at the turn. It is rather narrow, with open string, moulded hand-rail, a newel which is partly round and partly octagonal, and two turned balusters per tread. There are eighteen risers.
3. Flooring: Most floors have modern coverings. Second-floor rooms have 3 1/4" pine boards, painted.
4. Finish: Room by Room: (all items described are old).
 - a. Southeast room: Although a later addition, this area can be considered the east half of a double parlor, since there is a wide opening on the west wall.

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At the center of the east wall there is a fireplace of gray marble with incised gilded ornament. At each side of the opening there is a pilaster strip; in the entablature there is a projecting central tablet. In the overmantel, colonnettes support a low two-centered pointed arch. There are brackets above the capitals and scalloped cresting along the top. This overmantel is wood, varnished, of a dark brown color.

Door and window openings have architrave trim, now painted white. There is a moulded base, on a plinth. At the top of the wall there is a frieze about two feet wide, containing delicate, very low relief composition ornament; geometrically arranged scrolls and foliage. An enriched picture mould marks the bottom of this frieze.

A wide rectangular opening on the west wall contains double sliding doors, each having four moulded panels; there is a silver mortice lock. Above the doors there is a grille which appears to be cast brass; it is divided into three square panels and two horizontal rectangular panels, symmetrically. In each smaller panel there is a torch super-imposed on a wreath, with scrolls in the corners. In each larger panel there is a wreath with four radiating anthemions, their axes forming an X; at the outer corners there are anthemion-like scrolls.

At the center of the ceiling is suspended a combination gas and electric lighting fixture, made of brass. There are three globes on brackets and a globe at the bottom. This fixture has been in the house for a long time, but was installed after 1889, since it does not appear in a photograph of that date.

- b. South central room: This opens to the southeast room and is of the same size and shape. Each room has a large bay window at the center of its south wall, containing a decorative grille at the head of the opening to the room. The trim is largely similar.

In this room the old ceiling is visible. Above a frieze similar to that described above, on the ceiling, there is a border formed by a meandering conventional scroll in low relief. In the center of the ceiling there is a gilded centerpiece. On the ceiling of the bay window there is an ornamental panel containing a foliated design.

- c. Enclosed porch: This extends beyond the east wall of

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the southeast room, connecting with it through a door south of the fireplace. The porch is shallow, and in character resembles a large bay window. Along its east wall there is a group of six arched windows resembling windows on fine railway cars of the period. (According to Noreen Humphreys, their measurements are identical). At the south end there are two similar windows. Walls above a low dado rail are faced with horizontal matched and beaded boards. The chimney projects into this area and is faced with matched beaded boards; at each side there are small shelves. The ceiling is of matched and beaded boards. All woodwork in this room is now painted white, except for natural bamboo grilles at the head of each window.

- d. Stair hall: Door trim is similar to that in the rooms described above. Above the base there is a wainscot ornamented by a low-relief geometrical interlacing pattern in red, black and yellow. There is a frieze containing a rinceau of mixed style, somewhat Moorish, in relief; it is predominately brown. The ceiling has a wide painted ornamental border of the same color.
- e. North Room: This area, apparently two rooms of equal size originally, is now a single long room used as an office. The room had reached its present state by 1889, however. It has two windows on the east end, two large bay windows on the north side, and a fireplace centered on the west end.

A wooden screen divides the room into two equal areas. It has the form of a segmental arch (of low rise) supported on two columns and pilaster responds. The head of this opening consists of two carved planks, with a space between them, the carved faces facing the halves of the room, respectively. The wood is Philippine mahogany in its natural color. The carving design is a symmetrical foliated scroll, rather bold in scale. Each column has a tall capital with an abacus, below which are acanthus leaves; midway up the shafts there is a moulded band. These columns rest on pedestals. The pilasters are fluted, with plain capitals moulded to an S-profile. Columns and pilasters are also finished natural color.

There is a high moulded wooden base. Around the openings there is architrave trim. One old four-panel door remains, with a porcelain knob; two others, with five horizontal

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panels, are of a later date. There is paneling in the bay window recesses, above and below the openings. These windows are similar to those in the enclosed porch, and have bamboo grilles in the heads.

The room cornice is wood, consisting of a flat cove between moulded bands. Below it there is a frieze about one foot wide, ornamented with a complex scroll motive in low relief, yellow on a brown background.

The walls are covered with a low-relief ornamental pattern of conventional foliated character, whose principal lines are undulating verticals. This is yellow on a green background; the colors appear to be original. The material is some kind of a composition.

The western half of the room has a wainscot, containing a somewhat naturalistic floral pattern in low relief: dull gold against dull green. Its lower border is formed by an interlace band, and at the top there is a band of overlapping rosettes.

The fireplace is comparable to those designed by Eastlake; it has an overmantel with bracketed shelves and coved hood. The hearth is of ceramic tiles with a floral border; plain tiles alternate with ornamental ones. The colors are brown, dark green, light yellow and dull red. The fireplace opening has a border of diamond-shaped ornamental tiles on a background of plain triangular units. At each side there is a small colonnette with an elaborate base and a crocket capital. A bracket above each colonnette supports the mantel shelf, whose bed moulding is an ovolo in which sections of greater and lesser diameter alternate. A frieze between the opening and the shelf contains a panel in the form of a segment of a circle. This panel and the colonnettes are made of wood whose grain contains burls; the remainder of the fireplace woodwork is pine, stained and varnished. In the overmantel there is a rectangular mirror with beveled edges, at each side of which there are shelves. The coved hood is ornamented with a pattern in low relief: two sizes of rosettes alternating. At the top there is a small railing. All woodwork of the overmantel is dark brown.

Moulded trim at the corners of the bay-window openings was cut off near the top at some early date, and mahogany capitals inserted. These have the profile of a cyma reversa above a bead, and are covered with carved ornament.

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In the ceiling there are two plaster centerpieces. Traces of relief ornament can be seen in some places along the ceiling, comparable to that on the walls.

There are four wall-bracket electric lighting fixtures, each double.

- f. Miscellaneous finish: Corridors in the western part of the house have high wainscoting of matched and beaded boards, visible in places beneath a later covering. There is a plain base. The second-floor rooms have dwarf side walls and cove plaster ceilings. Doors have four moulded panels and porcelain knobs; the trim is plain. In the hall there is a wainscot of five-inch vertical matched and beaded boards, visible in places beneath a later covering. There is a plain base. In the ceiling of the hall there is an unusual opening: a glazed window-ventilator, hinged with a counterweight and pulley.

D. Site and Surroundings:

This lot is at the southwest corner of North Division Street, to which the building faces, and West Robinson Street. The terrain is level. Most of the lot is occupied by the building.

Prepared by: Harley J. McKee
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 18, 1972
(date of visit)

PART III. Project Information

These records are part of the documentation made during the latter half of 1972 and the summer of 1973 in a project undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Nevada State Park System to record structures in Carson City and nearby areas.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Eric R. Cronkhite, Administrator, Nevada State Park System, and Mrs. Marshall Humphreys of the Nevada Landmarks Society assisted the HABS recorders in Nevada. Professor Harley J. McKee, Supervisory Architect, National Park Service, selected the subjects and provided architectural data for the sixteen Carson City structures which were recorded. Historical documentation for these buildings was prepared by S. Allen Chambers, Jr., Architectural Historian, Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor for the 1973 Nevada Summer Team,

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which produced the measured drawings, was Robert L. Hartwig of Harvard University. Student assistant architects were John T. M. Creery (University of Utah), Robert P. Mizell (University of Florida), and Jack W. Schafer (University of Cincinnati). Photographs were made by Aaron A. Gallup of Sacramento, California.